IN SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

August 18, 1842.
Ordered to be printed.—To accompany bill H. R. 444.

Mr. Woodbridge submitted the following

REPORT:

The Committee on Commerce, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 444) entitled, "An act making an appropriation for filling up the ground in the rear of the sea-wall at St. Augustine," and other documents relative to the same matter, respectfully report:

That the sea-wall, in said bill and documents alluded to, appears to have been constructed at the instance and upon the representations of a late delegate from the Territory of Florida; the first appropriation therefor having been made in 1833.

The course of the wall being in conformity with the *general* direction of the shore, but without following its occasional incurvations, it has resulted that spaces have been left between the wall and the shore, where an accumulation and retention of water and other substances take place; and from a supposed decomposition of which, exhalations are presumed to arise prejudicial to the general health. To fill up those spaces intervening between the wall and the shore, so as to elevate the entire surface above the tides, would cost, according to the estimate of the engineer department, about $12,000; and the space and ground thus reclaimed from the ocean, would inure principally to the city authorities of St. Augustine and to individual proprietors, the United States owning very little real estate there to be benefited by the operation.

The structure of the wall is represented as having been erected according to the plan of the department, but the sloping and "regulating" of the ground in rear of it, though in progress, according to that plan, is not yet completed. To avoid the expense of filling up and elevating the whole space above the flow of the tides, openings or gaps have been left at appropriate points through the wall; and it is the purpose of the department having charge of the work so to slope and *regulate* the ground in rear of the wall as to effect the entire drainage of the area through those gaps. To effect this purpose, and thus to complete the whole intended operation, adequate funds (the unexpended residue of former appropriations) are believed to remain in the control of the department.

This whole plan, which appears to your committee to be judicious and appropriate, will remove, it is believed, when completed, all just or well-founded apprehensions of disease from the cause alluded to. But if, upon the completion of the work, those expectations should prove fallacious, it will remain to be considered, if that experiment should fail, how far it may be-

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come the duty of Congress to apply the more expensive remedy. Taking this general view of the matter, your committee respectfully report back the bill committed to them, and, with it, their recommendation that it be indefinitely postponed.

All which is respectfully submitted.